



**Alan Lloyd, Ph.D.**  
*Secretary for  
Environmental  
Protection*

# California Regional Water Quality Control Board

## San Francisco Bay Region

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1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400, Oakland, California 94612  
(510) 622-2300 • Fax (510) 622-2460  
<http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay>



**Arnold Schwarzenegger**  
*Governor*

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Contact: Dyan Whyte, 510-622-2441, [dwhyte@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:dwhyte@waterboards.ca.gov)  
Wil Bruhns, 510-622-2327, [wbruhns@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:wbruhns@waterboards.ca.gov)

### **Water Quality Officials Address Fecal Pathogens in Tomales Bay**

**Oakland**—The San Francisco Bay Regional Water Quality Control Board (Water Board) will begin a 45-day public comment period today, March 4, 2005, on a proposed plan to control discharges to Tomales Bay and its tributaries.

The goal of the plan is to protect Tomales Bay shellfish consumers, boaters, and swimmers by minimizing their risk of contacting waterborne disease. The plan, referred to as a Total Management Daily Load (TMDL), addresses pathogens in Tomales Bay and its tributaries. These waters have been listed as impaired since 1996.

Pathogens are microorganisms that can cause disease. The pathogens of concern in Tomales Bay and its tributaries are fecal pathogens—those organisms found in the intestinal tracts of warm-blooded animals, including humans, and shed through animal and human feces. Once shed, these pathogens can be transferred to humans and wildlife from water.

“A variety of viruses, bacteria, and protozoa found in human, livestock, and wild animal waste can be transmitted to humans through water and pose serious health problems,” says Water Board Executive Officer Bruce Wolfe. “Some of these pathogens include salmonella, Giardia, Norwalk virus, and strains of E. coli.”

Water Board staff found the potential sources of pathogens in Tomales Bay include faulty septic systems; small wastewater treatment facilities; boat discharge; municipal runoff; grazing

and livestock farms; dairy farms; horse facilities; and wildlife. The TMDL requires all potential sources take steps to identify their discharges and develop and implement a plan to reduce runoff.

Starting March 4, 2005, several documents for this TMDL, as required by the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), will be available from the Water Board's Web site at [www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/tomalesbaypathogenstmdl.htm](http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/sanfranciscobay/tomalesbaypathogenstmdl.htm). Copies can also be requested by contacting Russell Hoyle, 510-622-2334, [rhoyle@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:rhoyle@waterboards.ca.gov).

The comment period is an opportunity to review and comment on the technical issues and potential solutions. Comments should be received in writing by April 20, 2005, and can be directed to: Farhad Ghodrati, 510-622-2331, [fghodrati@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:fghodrati@waterboards.ca.gov), or Rebecca Tuden, 510-622-5685, [btuden@waterboards.ca.gov](mailto:btuden@waterboards.ca.gov). Letters can also be mailed to the above contacts at 1515 Clay Street, Suite 1400, Oakland, California 94612.

The Water Board will hold two public hearings to discuss the proposed TMDL. At the first meeting, held on April 20, 2005, the Water Board will receive public testimony based on written comments received on the proposed TMDL. The Water Board is expected to take action at the second hearing, held on June 15, 2005. Both hearings will be held at the Water Board's regular monthly meeting, which begins at 9 a.m. in the first floor auditorium of the Elihu M. Harris State Building, 1515 Clay Street in Oakland.

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**What are TMDLs?** TMDLs are plans to restore clean water. TMDLs define how much of a pollutant a water body can tolerate and still meet water quality standards. The federal Clean Water Act (303[d]) requires that states identify water bodies that do not meet water quality standards and establish Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) for pollutants causing water quality impairments. TMDL projects examine these water quality problems, identify sources of pollutants, and specify actions that create solutions to ensure the impaired water bodies attain their beneficial uses.